

Regional Centre to expand clean energy opportunities in the South Asia region by offering project development support, training, and best practice information to stakeholders in micro hydro development

Kathmandu - Today marks the launch of the “Regional Centre of Excellence in Micro Hydro (RCEMH)”. This center is the first such institution in South Asia dedicated to promoting micro hydro development. An initiative of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)’s South Asia Regional Initiative for Energy (SARI/E) program, this Center was launched in cooperation with the Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPAC), Ministry of Environment in Nepal. Micro hydro is a term used for hydropower generation of up to or less than 1000-kilowatt capacity, including both mechanical and electrical power.

RCEMH will build on Nepal’s extensive track record in micro hydro project development and offer technical assistance and training in project monitoring and knowledge management to policy makers and community stakeholders from the region.

The Honorable Minister of Finance, Mr. Surendra Pandey and the Honorable Minister of Environment, Mr. Thakur Sharma, from the Government of Nepal, and the Mission Director of USAID/Nepal, Dr. Kevin A. Rushing will launch the program at a ceremony in Kathmandu.

USAID/Nepal’s Mission Director, Dr. Kevin A. Rushing said that, “this Centre of Excellence will facilitate access to clean energy technologies throughout the South Asia region. By stimulating new clean energy enterprises, the Center will increase access to energy for thousands of people, thus relieving countries like Nepal from rising energy costs, promoting clean energy and improving economic opportunities.”

The Center will begin operating immediately with a four-day training program for sixteen delegates from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, and Pakistan.

AEPAC’s Executive Director, Dr. Narayan Chaulagain says that “Nepal is proud to offer its expertise and experience in the development of mini micro hydro projects, where AEPAC has some 600 operating projects with an installed capacity of 7.2 MW in rural and remote areas.

We are keen to organize this body of knowledge and supplement it with regional best practices and make it available to community stakeholders, clean energy project developers, and financial institutions across the South Asian region.”

USAID's SARI/E program promotes energy security in South Asia through three activity areas: cross border energy trade; energy market formation; and clean energy access partnerships. Through these activities, SARI/E facilitates more efficient regional energy resource utilization, mitigates the environmental impacts of energy production, and increases regional access to energy resources. SARI/E countries include: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

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